

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF CAMPAIGN ISSUES
AND CANDIDATES' PERSONALITY TRAITS AS
INFLUENCING VARIABLES ON VOTING BEHAVIOR

By

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Attempts to understand the functioning of political communication have attacked the problem from many different approaches, including political science concepts, sociological concepts, and communication concepts. The main problem with research in this area is that the disjointed nature of the approaches has not led to a systematic theory building and theory testing process. Studies of political communication and voting behavior have located many variables that are related to the voting process.¹ Kitt and Gleicher investigated the influence of peer relationships on voting according to party preference. They concluded that "if a respondent is a member of mixed friendship groups [both Democrats and Republicans] . . . he is less likely to feel strongly about his vote inclination."² Shepard constructed a model of voting behavior comparing economic self interest and public regardingness. He stated that "a model of referendum voting as a behavior based upon calculations of economic self interest was formulated and found to yield empirically congruent predictions with four times the frequency of predictions developed from a model of public regardingness as a value premise in voting behavior."³

Two of the important variables which have emerged are issues and candidates' personalities.⁴ For example, Eli found that the three variables of candidate's image, party image, and issue orientation

accounted for .98 of the variance in his model of voting behavior in the 1970 Tennessee gubernatorial election.⁵

Issues are not defined in the sense that the term is used by some political candidates. That is, many times any variable which might affect the voters' decision is labeled "issue." In terms of political communication, and in this study, an issue is defined as a statement of proposed governmental policy, a defense of present governmental policy, or an attack of present or proposed governmental policy.

Personality traits are defined as consistent behavior by the candidates which indicate mental or emotional traits. Personalities are indicated by any available information about the candidates' personality traits. The reality of these traits is unimportant, except as they exist in the voters' minds.

The question, which is and has been debated, concerns the relative importance of these two variables in the voters' decisions. Gene Wyckoff argued that the image or personality of the candidate is the most important factor: "The influence of issues on the outcome of elections also seems to be declining as 1) political questions become too complex for ready statement or comprehension, and 2) candidates themselves avoid assuming issue positions that might be considered too extreme."⁶

Contrary to this view, Sherrod observed that the consideration of governmental policy is the important variable in the voters' judgments: "the less intense their voters' feelings toward the issue, the greater is their tolerance for inconsistency between their own and their candidate's position,"⁷ and vice versa.

In his study of the 1972 Presidential campaign, Swanson found that

voters listed solutions to problems and personal qualities as the two most important considerations in their decision.⁸ The dominance of one factor, however, was unclear. Of the Nixon voters 27.4% said that personal qualities were their main consideration and 34.5% of the Nixon voters reported that his solutions to problems were the primary basis for their decision. Of the McGovern voters who were surveyed, 59.0% said their decision was based on personal qualities of the candidate and 27.2% based their decision on McGovern's approach to problems.

Before attempting to understand how these two variables work, there is a basic question that needs to be answered. Are these two variables evaluated similarly by the voter? That is, does the voter use the same frame of reference to evaluate the two variables? Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum investigated the existence of a political frame of reference. They reported:

This indicates, according to our interpretation, that despite their different political outlooks, despite their gross differences in the meanings of particular concepts, like TRUMAN, OUR POLICY IN CHINA, and SENATOR McCARTHY, these groups of voters employ essentially the same frame of reference in making political judgments. They have the same sets of "values," the same relevant discriminations with respect to political persons and issues.⁹

The discussion of the structure of the political frame of reference will be presented later in a discussion of the nature of political attitudes. The important point in Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum's research is that there is a consistent frame of reference for both issues and political personalities.

Perhaps the most intensive study of any political communication was the study of the Nixon-Kennedy television debates in 1960.¹⁰ The series of studies attempted to locate some important variables which affected the electorates' perceptions of the candidates. Although many

variables such as channel of communication, candidates' physical appearance, and issue positions, caused speculation, a general model of the judgmental process was not presented. Without a general model of this process, an orderly investigation of important variables, the interaction of variables, and new concepts that are discovered may not be made, since the direction needed to understand political communication will be unclear.

Two dissertations written at Southern Illinois University attempted to use linear regression in two gubernatorial campaigns.¹¹ The models had three variables; issues, candidates' personalities, and social factors. Both models were created after the election. Therefore, although the models gave an indication of the weight of certain variables, little evaluation of the effects of the communication process could be made.

Most studies of political communication and voting behavior have a common approach. The information has been gathered in field settings and related to actual elections. This empirical method has made valuable contributions in the location of important variables. The main problem, however, is that such studies lack any control which is necessary for an in-depth and isolated examination of variables. Through a systematic controlling of political communication variables, the manner in which a variable operates can become clear because outside sources of variation can be controlled or eliminated. With an understanding of how a limited number of variables operate, new political communication variables can be added to the controlled situation to determine interactions within the process, thus building a model of the process. The purposes of this study were to determine if issues or personality

traits were the dominant factor in the voter's decision, and if the reinforcement of existing attitudes through communication caused attitude change as shown by the use of a controlled election situation.

There were two questions which were investigated in this study. First, was there a dominance of one of the two variables in the voters' decisions? To explore this question, the functionings of these two variables were examined when the voters were choosing between two liked candidates, two disliked candidates, and two ambivalent candidates.

Secondly, what was the effect of the campaign process on the voters' attitudes? To answer this question, a comparison of the important variables of voters' decisions in an immediate choice situation was compared to the important variables in a choice made after the exposure to the campaign communication process. Also, an examination of attitudes before and after the campaign was done to determine if the reinforcement of attitudes changed the degree of the attitude. To further explain and justify these research questions, it is necessary to examine the nature of political attitudes, a theory of the political campaign as a persuasive process, and the use of discriminant analysis.

The Political Attitude

Research on the measurement of attitudes has suggested that attitudes are not unidimensional.¹² Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum explored the nature of political preference and suggested a two dimensional view was necessary.¹³ The dimension, other than agree-disagree, seems to be importance of a concept. In their discussion of attitudes as predictors of behavior, Kiesler, Collins, and Miller observed:

Indeed, Rokeach and Rothman found that predictions are significantly better when one takes account of the importance of separate items. The more important the subject thinks X is,

say, the more it affects his evaluation of X and Y in combination. Implicatively, the more important the source is to the subject, the greater the change in attitudes about the object and the less about the source. The reverse would presumably be true, the more important the object.¹⁴

Himmelstrand also explored the structure of attitudes as predictors. In his study he found that "the disposition to make a transition for 'word,' i.e., verbal attitudes, to action varies from individual to individual depending on how deeply 'rooted' or 'anchored' verbal attitudes are in the individuals personality or in other attitude components."¹⁵

There have been several studies of political communication using the multi-dimensional view of political attitudes. Richard S. Elster and James R. Capra created a two dimensional model by using similarity-dissimilarity judgments of 88 subjects. They reported, "the results suggest it might be possible to sort out the dimensions of appeal of political personalities."¹⁶ Kitchens used a two dimensional model to examine ego-involvement and importance of campaign issues in the 1972 Presidential campaign. The study suggested that there may be a correlation between the two dimensions. The results indicated that "the groups generally showed high ego-involvement with the highly ranked questions based on the importance dimension."¹⁷

In Russell's investigation of media and non-media influences on voting behavior in the 1970 gubernatorial campaign, many different dimensions of attitudes were investigated. Russell explained that "personal data about each subject was gathered to aid in determining what, if any, cross pressures may combine with the media variables and images to produce change in the subject."¹⁸

Eli also concluded multi-dimension measurement was needed to examine political attitudes. He stated, "it is the contention of this

researcher that there are probably several dimensions of any given attitude toward an object or situation."¹⁹ In his study of the 1970 Tennessee gubernatorial election, Eli used semantic differentials, behavioral differentials, and Likert-type scales.

There is a unique characteristic of political attitudes which should be pointed out. The main goal of most attitude theories is the connection between attitudes and behavior. Most criticism of attitude theories is based on the fact that individuals do not behave toward objects in the predicted direction of the theory, or that the theory is not totally generalizable.²⁰ The measurement of attitudes concerning political factors does not try to predict the way a person will act when presented with an object. That is, regardless of a subject's attitude about the Arab-Israeli dispute, the person, himself, will never be required to actually face the problem. Rather, a person will select someone to face the problem for him, that person being the political candidate. Therefore, whether or not a person would carry out his attitude or not is unimportant. What is important is the belief that the person that he is voting for has the same attitude and will carry out the action. Further discussion of this point will be presented in an explanation of the communication process of a political campaign.

The Campaign As A Persuasive Process

Many retrospective political communication studies of election have been done. This approach yields few generalizations about the effect of the campaign process. These studies, however, did not attempt to control communication variables for two reasons. First, if control were exerted, the researcher would become an intervening variable interacting with the phenomena being studied. Secondly, the

pragmatics of a political campaign would restrict the level and amount of control given any researcher. Although it would be difficult to duplicate a political campaign in an experimental setting, a simulation without losing necessary controls is possible.

The concept of using a simulation for the study of social phenomena has been previously investigated. Dawson explained the desirability of using a simulation methodology by stating:

In many instances, especially in the study of social and psychological phenomena, it is undesirable or even impossible to conduct experiments on real systems. By successfully simulating the significant variables, it is possible to explore such phenomena by experimenting with the simulated system.²¹

Although there have been several attempts to apply a simulation methodology to the voting situation,²² Laponce pointed out that this methodology has been somewhat overlooked:

Though many political scientist, as advisers to governments, have been in a favourable position to perform realistic simulations, they have either refrained from doing so, because they were not able to convince the politicians with whom they had to collaborate, or more likely, had not thought of it.²³

Deutsch took a more extreme position that the utilization of the simulated methodology is not only more desirable, but necessary to understand the political situation:

The truth is not in any one kind of evidence but in the relation of many kinds. The research for multiple evidence may require laboratory experiments, survey research, content analysis, general observations and case studies, individual and aggregative data, and therefore five or six kinds of evidence for every serious effort to understand what is going on.²⁴

The necessity of including a simulation of the communication process can also be supported by the fact that voters' decisions occur during different times in the campaign. For example, survey data on Presidential elections from 1948 to 1968 indicated that voters

reached their decisions at different times during campaigns.²⁵ Swanson further confirmed this notion in his study of the 1972 campaign.²⁶

These empirical reports add support to Fotheringham's theory of persuasion: "The concept of instrumentality encourages seeing persuasion as a campaign - a structured sequences of efforts to achieve adoption, continuance, deterrence, or discontinuance - rather than as a one-shot effort."²⁷

There seem to be two possible reasons for voters' decisions being formulated at different times. First, the difference may be due to inherent individual differences in each person's cognitive ability to make decisions. Secondly, it may be a socialization factor. Although there is a deadline for the decision to be made, when the voter enters the voting booth, the voter knows that he may make the decision, and even change it several times, at any point during the time period. Either way, by allowing a time period for decision with subjects aware of a deadline, a simulation of the decision-making process as well as a simulation of the campaign structure could be constructed. The specific controls of the situation will be discussed in Chapter Two.

The concept of persuasion in political communication must be examined from two viewpoints. First an examination of a theory of persuasion from the view of the communicator is necessary. Next, a view of attitude change and processing of the communication will be examined from the receiver's point of view. An examination of these two theories can reveal how they are related in terms of political communication, and in fact, may be one theory.

Persuasion in the modern political campaign does not aim for a change in the type of response that the voter exhibits toward a concept,

but tries to reinforce that response. The candidate will attempt to find, for example, what issue is important to the voters and attempt to reinforce that belief in order to become acceptable to the electorate.²⁸ Miller claimed that the reinforcement of attitudes is a goal of persuasion. He explained that "their evaluative responses need not be altered in kind, only in degree . . . the communicative end is the extension of rewarding stimuli to the audience, an end calculated to increase the probability that they will retain their present store of evaluated responses."²⁹

The reinforcement of existing attitudes does not mean that the aim of political communication is stagnation. As Swanson explained, "Pre-existing perceptions of candidates and their solutions to problems thus do not preclude the possibility of change induced through political communication; they merely set parameters within which the political persuaders must work."³⁰ This view of political communication leads to the question of what happens in terms of the receiver.

Although the issue stand or personality trait that is presented to the voter may not reach an individual's ideal of the concept, the position may be acceptable to the individual. In their book Social Judgment, Sherif and Hovland discussed this concept in terms of latitudes of acceptance and latitudes of rejection.³¹ They defined the concept stating:

A latitude of acceptance for certain stands on an issue implies a rather definite range of rejection as well. It is defined operationally as the range of the positions on an issue that an individual considers acceptable to him (including the one "most acceptable" to him). The latitude of rejection consists of the positions he finds objectionable (including the one "most objectionable" to him).³²

The two regions are divided by a non-committal region for those solutions which have not yet been judged.

If this theory is examined in terms of political communication with the persuasion theory, their relationship becomes clear. Sherif and Hovland noted the differences in individuals with respect to their theory; "The stands of different individuals vary in their personal significance and in the size and locations of the latitudes of acceptance and rejection."³³ Given the individual differences, the political communicator must find an attitude position which is in the latitude of acceptance of, theoretically, 50% plus one person in the electorate. His communication must reinforce that position because of the unique connection between political attitudes and the desired behavior, which was previously discussed.

For example, the logic from the viewpoint of the candidate would be, "I believe in A, A is acceptable to you, I like B, B is acceptable to you, and I want to do C, C is acceptable to you, therefore VOTE FOR ME!" The communication would be constructed in the negative when speaking of an opponent.

Movement or change in attitudes from reinforcement could take one of several forms. First, the continuing reinforcement of an acceptable idea may make that solution "most acceptable" and hence, increase the importance of the variable. Likewise, when a point in the latitude of rejection is attacked, the unacceptable idea may become the "most unacceptable."

Conversely, if points in the latitude of acceptance are attacked, the receiver will become stronger in his own belief, and will align himself further away from the advocated stance. Also, if the communicator attempts to reinforce in a positive manner points in the latitude of rejection, the receiver will see those points as more negative.

Sherif and Hovland called the functioning of variables in this manner the assimilation-contrast effect.³⁴

Finally, when a dichotomous choice has to be made, it is possible that the uncommitted will accept the concept. Sherif and Hovland support this concept; "When an individual adopts a stand on a controversial issue, he is mindful of the prevailing opinions in the group of which he is a member or which he aspires."³⁵

To summarize, political communication is a persuasive process which functions by reinforcing known existing acceptable attitudes. Although the variables may be altered during the process, it may be possible to use a sample to locate acceptable concepts and predict voting behavior based on the set of concepts without knowing the exact order of significance. If there is a pattern of change which can be discovered, it will indicate two important concepts. First, if there is a pattern, it will indicate a consistent functioning of these two variables in voting behavior. This information would be the first step in constructing a model of voting behavior. Secondly, with equal reinforcement of all the variables, if a pattern emerges, then to make political communication more efficient, the amount of reinforcement on these variables could be increased.

Discriminant Analysis

To determine which variables were most important and if there was a pattern in the way voters decide on issue and personality traits, a discriminant analysis was performed on the attitude data.³⁶ Discriminant analysis is a multivariate technique which uses a density function in order to place subjects into different groups. To establish a model for a group, it is necessary to know which group the data initially came from.

For example, to establish a model to discriminate between candidate X's voters and candidate Y's voters, the attitude data from a group of subjects who voted for each of the candidates would be placed under their respective groups. A discriminant analysis would then be applied. This analysis would produce several important facts. First, the results will reveal how many misclassifications of subjects result from the use of the density function. Secondly, the variables are ranked in order of importance in the discrimination, and an F score is given for each variable to determine if the variable is independently significant. Finally, a discriminant linear function in stepwise fashion for each group is given which can be used to classify new data into each group. Hence, this function can be a predictor.

New data can be classified by applying the new data to the function:

assign to group 1 if $z'C_1 + C_{10} \geq z'C_2 + C_{20}$, otherwise assign to group 2, where

$$\begin{aligned} z' &= \text{data matrix} \\ C_x &= \text{constant vector} \\ C_{x0} &= \text{constant} \end{aligned}$$

The probability that a new piece of data has been misclassified can be calculated with the formula:

$$1 - \frac{e^{z'C_1 + C_{10}}}{\sum_{G=1}^2 e^{z'C_1 + C_{10}}}$$

The error of misclassification gives more information about the goodness of the fit of the model.

Research Hypotheses

Working from the concepts of social judgment theory, the following research hypothesis were formulated:

- 1) Because pre-existing attitudes were reinforced as opposed to attempting to alter the kind of attitudinal responses, the variables which were important in discriminating between the voting groups in the offset data will be the same variables important for discriminating between voter groups in the posttest data.
- 2) Since the variables important for the discrimination in the offset data will be the same as the important variables in the posttest data, the discriminant linear function produced by the discriminant analysis computed for the offset data will produce accurate predictions of the voting behavior for subjects in the experimental condition.
- 3) Because the importance of a variable is dependent upon the level of ego-involvement as opposed to situational categories, such as issues and personality traits, a combination of the variables will discriminate between group of voters better than either variable alone.
- 4) Due to the assimilation-contrast effects resulting from the reinforcement of attitudes, voters attitudes, after experiencing the simulation, will be more positive toward variables associated with the selected candidate, and more negative toward variables associated with the rejected candidate.

Implications and Limitations

By placing controls on the situation, an isolated look at two important variables as they relate to the political decision can be made. This type of examination cannot be made in a field study for two reasons; 1) there is no way to control other variables, and 2) taking a number of measurements for exploratory purposes is difficult because of the size of the sample needed for an accurate measurement of the population.

Even with the control of variables there are certain limitations which are inherent in the study. First, this study did not construct a complete model of voting behavior. The two variables under examination, however, do seem to be most important and the necessary starting point for an understanding of the effects of political communication. Secondly, the effects of different media was not explored in this study. The process of political communication is a multimedia process, and the question of the effects of each media is important to the study of political communication.

Despite the limitations, this study can make two important contributions. By the elimination of variables, except the two under examination, the functioning of these political communication variables as they influence the voters' judgmental process can be made clear. From the understanding of these variables, new variables can later be added, thus continuing an orderly process of political communication model building. Secondly, the simulation of the political communication process can produce both a new methodology for future political communication theory construction, and new knowledge about variables which can be examined in actual field situations, thus lending continuity of direction to the problem of understanding political communication.

Notes

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The experimental design for this study was an offset pretest-posttest design with a control group. The offset group was used as the model group for the use of the discriminant analysis.

Measurement of Attitudes

The response to issue statements was measured with a seven step Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," and a seven step Likert-type importance scale, ranging from "very important" to "very unimportant."

The response to personality traits was measured with a seven step Likert-type scale ranging from "highly desirable" to "highly undesirable," and a seven step Likert-type importance scale. For numeric analysis, "strongly agree," "highly desirable," and "very important" were assigned a value of 7, and "strongly disagree," "highly undesirable," and "very unimportant" were assigned a value of 1.

The choice of issues was made by a survey of national magazines, national television newscasts, and newspapers. The issues used were chosen based on the number of times that an issue was discussed in all the media. Eight issues were chosen for the study. They included 1) the impeachment of the President, 2) the sale of arms to Israel, 3) the attempts of oil companies to repeal ecology measures, 4) the limitation of Presidents to one term, 5) the return of price controls, 6) the Equal Rights Amendment, 7) ending the \$750 child deduction on

Federal income tax, and 8) the public financing Presidential and Congressional elections.

The choice of personality traits were selected from Osgood's evaluative dimension and Hamilton and Huffman's study of impression formation.¹ In order to put the personality traits in a political setting, as opposed to simply stating the candidate has a certain trait, a pilot study was conducted. Statements were written and the subjects (N = 60) were asked to choose one of five traits which the statement indicated. A blank space was also provided and the subjects were told that if they felt none of the five adjectives described the statement adequately, another adjective should be filled in. The statements were not accepted unless at least 80% of the subjects agreed that the statement indicated a certain trait.

From the study, eleven trait statements were found to be acceptable. They were:

- 1) unaggressive- candidate X proposed much legislation while serving as a state senator, but he did not push for their passage when they met with opposition.
- 2) Inconsistent- candidate X changes his mind often. Sometimes on an issue stand he has previously taken.
- 3) follower- candidate X never proposed any original legislation, but he supported many bills proposed by other senators.
- 4) dishonest- a citizens group investigated all the candidates in a race. In investigating candidate X, they found evidence of campaign funds coming from organized crime.
- 5) talker- candidate X has proposed many citizen committees to solve local problems. However, he has never actively participated in the organization of any of these groups.
- 6) progressive- candidate X helped raise funds to start an experimental school that would use new techniques for the teaching of the mentally retarded.
- 7) closeminded- candidate X has refused to support any legislation

which was not proposed by a member of the same political party as he belongs to.

- 8) good natured- candidate X takes a lot of kidding about being bald, but he responds by saying, "I'm not bald, other men are just too hairy."
- 9) aggressive- candidate X started his own business and made it into one of the largest companies in the state. He has been elected to the state legislature four times previously. He has never proposed a bill in the legislature that has been defeated, although some of them were quite controversial.
- 10) energetic- while in business, candidate X managed three companies at one time. He also found time to work as a "big brother" to underprivileged children and head the United Way fund raising campaign.
- 11) adventurous- candidate X spends his free time camping and traveling by canoe down rivers all over the United States.

The Predictor Model

The attitude measurement of the issue statements and the personality traits was given to a random sample of subjects ($N = 33$) in the basic speech course at the University of Florida.² The subjects were asked to indicate the degree of agreement with each issue statement and to indicate how important, at that point in time, the issue would be to them when considering whom to vote for in a congressional election. The subjects were then asked to indicate how desirable each of the personality traits is for a political candidate, and how important it would be for them to know about this trait before voting for a candidate for Congress. This data will be labeled "model data" in the following discussions.

A mean score for each issue and personality trait was computed. A positive sign was placed on each item if the mean score was on the "agree" or "desirable" end of the scale and a negative sign was placed on an item if the mean score was on the "disagree" or "undesirable" end

of scale. Mean scores for the importance ratings were computed in order to locate the order of importance for the issues and personality traits.

By using the positive and negative traits, a number of hypothetical candidates were created. There were two candidates which were positive on both issues and personalities, two candidates which were negative on both factors, and two candidates which were ambivalent, with one candidate being positive on issues and negative on personality traits, and the other candidate constructed oppositely.

For each candidate, two or three issues, and two or three personality traits were used. The use of only a few ideas has become necessary in modern American politics. Napolitan pointed out, "ordinarily a candidate will have 10 to 15 ideas for programs. This is too many to effectively utilize in a campaign. To use so many dilutes the message of the candidate and causes some confusion in the minds of the voters."³

The hypothetical candidates were then paired with two positive candidates, two negative candidates, and two ambivalent candidates competing. The subjects were given a written description of the pairs of hypothetical candidates and told that the descriptions were of candidates opposing each other in Congressional races in the near future. The subjects were then asked to vote for one candidate in each race (See Appendix A).

The subjects' attitude data on the variables used for each election was grouped according to which candidate each subject voted for. A discriminant analysis was then computed for the data to obtain several pieces of information. First, the discriminant function that was used as a predictor was obtained. Secondly, an estimation of the goodness of the model was given. Finally, the important variables that

indicated the group distinctions based on the immediate choice situation were located.

Prediction of Another Sample

Another random sample of subjects ($N = 69$) from the basic speech course were given the attitude measurements of the same issue and personality traits as the first group. This data will be referred to as the "pretest data." The new data was placed into groups by applying the discriminant function previously described to the data. The percentage of subjects classified into each group was the predicted vote for each candidate.

The Campaign As An Experimental Treatment

The subjects were told that they were going to select three men to serve in the U. S. Congress in a mock election. The candidates, who would actually be running in the near future, would spend five days campaigning for their votes, and on the fifth day an election would be held. The students were also told that the campaign and election would be used later in the course in the study of communication and society.

Using the personality statements and the issue statements on the attitude questionnaire, campaign messages were written. To insure that no other concepts were introduced in the description of the personality traits or issues, two validity checks were conducted using five judges.

To check for the validity of the personality trait statements, the statements were presented followed by the same four adjectives presented in the original validity check of the personality traits plus a space labeled "other." The judges were told to check all adjectives which applied plus add any concept which was not on the list. No statement was accepted unless four of the five judges agreed that only the one desired concept applied.

To check the validity of the issues, the statements used were presented to five judges followed by four possible issues and a space labeled "other." The judges were told to check the issues that they felt were involved in each statement and list any other issue not on the list. No statement was accepted unless four of the five judges agreed that only the desired issue was involved.

During the five days, the campaign messages were presented to subjects using video tape messages, taped messages to simulate radio, and written messages. Each candidate had one video taped commercial, one radio commercial, and two written messages (See Appendices B, C, D, and E). One written message was labeled as being compiled by a citizens' committee and the other report was labeled as an article by UPI reporters. The written messages were not presented as campaign propaganda, but contained information in report form. The video and audio messages included only information about a candidate's positive points or his opponents negative points.

On the fifth day of the campaign, the subjects voted using a simulated voting booth. Each ballot was marked for identification with a small number, and the subject's name who received the ballot was recorded. This procedure was done in order to correlate the votes with the attitude data. After each subject voted, he was given the attitude questionnaire on the issues and personality traits again. This data will be referred to as the "posttest data."

To explain the taking of the posttest, subjects were told that a mistake had been made on the first questionnaire. They were told that it was necessary for the person who created the questionnaire to know whether or not each person had voted in an actual election. Since this information was not given on the original questionnaire, the forms

would have to be done again.

CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE*

- 1st day - written message "The Citizens' Bureau Report On Three Congressional Campaigns" (Appendix D)
 - 2nd day - television commercials (Appendix B)
 - 3rd day - radio commercials (Appendix C)
 - 4th day - written message "The Congressional Preview" (Appendix E)
 - 5th day - Voting and Posttest
-

* Since the subjects were in their classes for an hour, each day the ambivalent candidates' messages were presented at the beginning of the period, the positive candidates' messages were given near the middle of the period, and the negative candidates' messages were given at the end of the period.

Experimental Controls

This process approach may seem to have lacked in control of the independent variables when compared to many laboratory approach studies in speech. If the reason for control and the types of controls which were applied to the study are examined, however, then the process may be seen as a legitimate approach. Kerlinger claimed that the control of independent variables in a research design was "so that extraneous and unwanted sources of systematic variance have minimal opportunity to operate."⁴

There were six controls which were placed on the process which helped limit the probability of unwanted independent variables contaminating the study. The first three factors concern the candidates for the mock elections. To control for acceptance or rejection of a candidate because of name or the association of a hypothetical candidate's name with the name of an actual political figure, the hypothetical

candidates were assigned one letter labels (for example, candidate A, candidate K, etc.). The second candidate variable controlled was contact with the candidates. There were no pictures of any of the hypothetical candidates, and the radio and video tapes were done in a third person approach. Finally, there was no way for the subjects to gain any additional information about the candidates since they were hypothetical.

Another control which would be impossible in a field study was the time of exposure to information. The time element for each candidate, for each medium of presentation, and for each variable was held approximately equal. Also, for all the vocal messages, the same announcer presented the messages, and on the video tape, he was not seen.

One danger in any study using realistic issues is that during the study an event will happen that will influence or change the attitude about one of the issues. To check for such an event, a control group was examined. In a field study, a greater danger, perhaps, is the candidate doing something that changes the voter's view of the candidate's personality. For example, Edmund Muskie's speech in New Hampshire and Thomas Eagleton's background being exposed in the 1972 Presidential campaign changed the voter's view of these men.⁵ Such an occurrence was controlled in this laboratory situation.

With the concern over finding ways to control laboratory studies in the social sciences, perhaps the danger of too much control has been overlooked. Although control for the influence of unwanted variables must be used, to obtain some realistic view of the process, some freedom of the variables under examination must be allowed. In this study, unlike some communication studies, contact between the subjects would not contaminate the study. Since this study was attempting to look at

a structure of a decision based on the exposure to a multimedia presentation, including interpersonal communication,⁶ as opposed to attempting to explain the influence of a single media, contact between subjects was necessary to the validity of the study.

Analysis of Results

For analysis of the research hypotheses, the subjects were grouped according to the selected candidate in each race, and the following statistical hypotheses were tested.

H₁: There is no significant difference in the predicted proportion of the vote and the proportion received by each candidate.

Difference of proportions z-tests were used on each hypothetical race to determine if the predicted proportion was different from the actual proportion.

H₂: The important variables used to discriminate between two positive candidates in the one-shot election are the same as the important variables used to discriminate between two positive candidates after the campaign process.

H₃: The important variables used to discriminate between two negative candidates in the one-shot election are the same as the important variables used to discriminate between two negative candidates after the campaign process.

H₄: The important variables used to discriminate between two ambivalent candidates in the one-shot election are the same as the important variables used to discriminate between two ambivalent candidates after the campaign process.

The discriminant analysis ranks variables according to their importance in discriminating between groups. In each case a Spearman's r rank test was run between the one-shot group and the campaign process group.

H₅: Neither issues or personality variables alone in the race with two positive candidates will discriminate better than a combination of the two variables.

- H₆: Neither issues or personality variables alone in the race with two negative candidates will discriminate better than a combination of the two variables.
- H₇: Neither issues or personality variables alone in the race with two ambivalent candidates will discriminate better than a combination of the two variables.

A discriminant analysis was performed on the posttest data from each of these situations. The model which used the fewest number of variables for maximum discrimination was used to determine significant variables.⁷ Discriminant analyses using just issue and just personality traits were computed for each campaign. The number of misclassifications using equal number of variables was examined in order to determine the best model.

- H₈: There is no difference in the degree of an attitude before and after the campaign process.

A mean score on the attitudes for each campaign model was computed using the pretest and the posttest data. For the variables of the selected candidate, it was determined if the responses of the group had moved toward "strongly agree," "highly desirable," or "very important." For the traits of the rejected candidates, it was determined if the mean responses of the group had moved toward "strongly disagree," "highly undesirable," or "very unimportant."

Notes

1. See Osgood, et. al., and David L. Hamilton and Leroy J. Huffan, "Generality of Impression Formation Process for Evaluative and Non-evaluative Judgments," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 20, (1971), p. 200-207.

2. It was felt that the college population would be an adequate sample for the simulation since the voting population tends to be "educated, wealthy, employed, white, and males." Robert S. Erikson and Norman R. Luttbeg, American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact, (John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1973), p. 8.

3. Napolitan, p. 120.

4. Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research, (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., New York, 1964), p. 299.

5. Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1972, (Atheneum, New York, 1973), Chapters 4 and 8.

6. Swanson, p. 140.

7. As in linear regression, the fewer the variables, the more reliable the model. See Hubert M. Blalock, Social Statistics, (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1972), p. 413-415.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

In this chapter, the variables with their valence computed from the offset data are listed in Table 1. Next, the predictor models computed from a discriminant analysis of the offset data are presented in Table 2.

To test hypothesis 1 that the proportion of the predicted votes and the actual votes are equal, Table 3 shows the two proportions and the corresponding z scores. To further explore the accuracy of the prediction models, the number of correct and incorrect classifications for each case are presented in Table 4.

To determine the accuracy of hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 that the variables important to the discriminant analysis for the offset data are the same variables important for discrimination of the posttest data, Spearman's association of rank test for each of the three choice situations are presented in Table 5.

For testing hypotheses 5, 6, and 7, which predicted that the model using both issues and personality traits would be better than using models having only one of the variables, the results of the three posttest discriminant analyses for each election are presented in Table 6.

To examine whether or not there was a change in the degree of attitudes before and after the campaign simulation, hypothesis 8,

Tables 7-16 report the results of the pretest and posttest discriminant analysis for each case. Included for each election is a table reporting the comparison of discriminant ability found in the pretest and posttest data, the discriminant analysis table for the pretest, and a discriminant analysis table for the posttest.

The results of the t-test for each variable for the control group is reported in Table 17.

Variables

The offset data indicated that there were five issue statements with which the subjects agreed, and five personality traits which were seen as desirable.

Table 1 - Issue and Trait Valence From the Offset Data

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Valence</u>
<u>Issue</u> -----	
1. Presidential Impeachment	+
2. The U.S. should not sell arms to Israel	-
3. The oil companies are trying to stop ecology	+
4. Presidents should be limited to one term	-
5. Price controls should be reinstated	+
6. The ERA should be supported	+
7. The \$750 per child income tax deduction should be eliminated	-
8. Presidential and Congressional elections should be publicly financed	+
<u>Personality Traits</u> -----	
1. inconsistent	-
2. unaggressive	-
3. follower	+
4. progressive	+
5. talker	-
6. dishonest	-
7. closeminded	-
8. good natured	+
9. aggressive	+
10. adventurous	+
11. energetic	+
(+) = agree or desirable (-) = disagree or undesirable	

Predictors

From the offset group, maximum discrimination was reached using four variables for the ambivalent case and five variables for the positive and negative cases. The discrimination produced the prediction function in Table 2.

Table 2 - Prediction Functions from the Offset Data and Variables Used in the Functions with D_1 indicating Agreement or Desirable Dimension and D_2 indicating Importance Dimension

Ambivalent (candidate A vs. candidate P)

Classify A if $7.04x_1 - 5.05x_2 + 4.03x_3 + 6.28x_4 - 35.36 \geq 5.07x_1 - 1.74x_2 + 3.11x_3 + 5.23x_4 - 23.05$, otherwise classify P, where

x_1 = dishonest (D_1)

x_2 = close minded (D_1)

x_3 = support for the ERA (D_1)

x_4 = \$750 per child income tax deduction (D_2)

Positive (candidate K vs. candidate V)

Classify K if $3.24x_1 + 3.34x_2 + 0.60x_3 + 0.54x_4 + 8.26x_5 - 44.75 \geq 3.56x_1 + 4.02x_2 + 0.19x_3 + 0.27x_4 + 7.28x_5 - 40.95$, otherwise classify V, where

x_1 = follower (D_1)

x_2 = aggressive (D_2)

x_3 = Presidential Impeachment (D_1)

x_4 = public financing of elections (D_1)

x_5 = public financing of elections (D_2)

Negative (candidate T vs. candidate R)

Classify T if $10.54x_1 - 1.54x_2 + 1.82x_3 + 9.11x_4 + 0.09x_5 - 61.09 \geq 9.29x_1 - 1.09x_2 + 1.42x_3 + 8.35x_4 + 1.26x_5 - 51.15$, otherwise classify R, where

x_1 = unaggressive (D_2)

x_2 = impeachment (D_1)

x_3 = no arms to Israel (D_1)

x_4 = oil companies stopping ecology (D_2)

x_5 = \$750 per child income tax deduction (D_2)

Using these models, the pretest data from the campaign group was applied, and vote percentages were predicted. These percentages were compared to the percentage of votes actually received after the campaign

process (Table 3). The number of misclassifications for each race was also computed (Table 4).

Association of rank tests showed that there was a significant correlation between the ranking of the variables for discrimination in the ambivalent race when comparing the offset group to the experimental posttest, but no significant correlation in the positive or negative cases (Table 5).

Table 3 - Comparison of Predicted and Actual Percentages Using Pretest Predictions and Actual Vote Count from the Experimental Group

	Predicted	Actual	z
candidate A	48.3%	48.3%	0.00
candidate P	51.7%	51.7%	0.00
candidate K	14.5%	43.5%	6.59*
candidate V	85.5%	56.5%	6.59*
candidate T	8.0%	43.5%	10.44*
candidate R	92.0%	56.5%	10.44*

* - significant at the .05 level

Table 4 - Misclassification of Predictions Using the Pretest Data

Data Classification			
Voter Group		candidate A	candidate P
	candidate A	16	14
	candidate P	18	14

Data Classification			
Voter Group		candidate K	candidate P
	candidate K	2	24
	candidate V	7	29

Data Classification			
Voter Group		candidate T	candidate R
	candidate T	4	23
	candidate R	2	33

Table 5 - Association of Variable Rank for Offset Data and Experimental Posttest Data Using Spearman's r

<u>Election</u> _ _ _ _ _	<u>r</u> _ _
Ambivalent	.55*
Positive	-.07
Negative	-.05

* - significant correlation at the .05 level

Issue vs. Personality

To determine if issue variables or personality variables could discriminate better than a combination of the two variables, the number of misclassifications from a discriminant analysis using just issue variables or just personality variables was compared to a model using a combination of the two variables (Table 6). In each case, the posttest model was used because of its superior ability to discriminate. The issue only and personality only models used for comparison had an equal number of factors as the combination model in order to keep reliability factors equal.

Table 6 - Comparison of Issue, Personality, and Combination Discriminant Models Using Posttest Data

<u>Election</u>	<u>Number of Variables</u>	<u>Classification Correct</u>	<u>Classification Incorrect</u>	<u>Percent Drop</u>
<u>Ambivalent</u>				
combination	4	44	18	maximum
issue	4	39	23	8.1%
personality	4	44	18	0.0%
<u>Positive</u>				
combination	3	47	15	maximum
issue	3	44	18	4.8%
personality	3	43	19	6.5%
<u>Negative</u>				
combination	5	44	18	maximum
issue	5	40	22	6.5%
personality	5	40	22	6.5%

In all three choice situations, maximum discrimination was obtained when using a combination of the two variables. In the ambivalent case, however, the use of personality variables alone discriminated equally as well as using a combination of issues and personality variables. In the positive and negative condition, a combination of the two variables discriminated better than using just issue or just personality variables.

Attitude Change

In order to determine the effect of the reinforcement of attitudes, the discriminant analysis from the pretest and the posttest were examined (Tables 7-16). Once again to have equivalent reliability models, the model which gave maximum discrimination between the voters in the posttest was compared to a model with an equal number of variables from the pretest.

A variable was considered to have significant change if it was not important for the pretest, but became important for discrimination in the posttest. Traditional test of change, such as t-test, was not applicable for the interpretation of the data for two reasons. First, the important factor was not only the movement of one group's mean, but the relationship of two groups' means in terms of distance between them. For example, on one variable, the change in a mean score for group A alone and the change in a mean score for group B alone may not reach a significant t level. However, if the changes increased the difference in terms of the distance between the means so that the variable could be used to discriminate between the groups, then the change is significant. Secondly, although the means may or may not be

independently significant, in terms of the F score produced by the analysis, if their contribution was important to the discrimination model, the changes in means were significant.

Table 7 - Classifications from the Discriminant Analysis Pretest and Posttest

Two Ambivalent Candidates (candidate A vs. candidate P)

	Number of Variables	Classification Correct	Classification Incorrect
Pretest	4	36	26
Posttest	4	44	18

Table 8 - Important Variables from the Pretest Discriminant Analysis and Means for Candidate Voter Groups

Variable	Candidate and Valence	Mean A	Mean P
energetic (D ₁)	P +	5.76	5.96
oil companies and ecology (D ₁)	A +	5.53	5.25
oil companies and ecology (D ₂)	A +	5.50	5.53
\$750 tax deduction (D ₁)	A +	4.93	5.56

(D₁) = agreement or desirable dimension

(D₂) = importance dimension

Table 9 - Important Variables from the Posttest Discrimination Analysis And Pretest And Posttest Means for Candidate Voter Groups

Variable	Candidate and Valence	Pretest Mean A	Posttest Mean A	Pretest Mean P	Posttest Mean P
dishonest (D ₁)	A -	1.76	2.06	1.68	1.34
energetic (D ₁)	P +	5.76	5.60	5.96	5.96
oil companies and ecology (D ₁)	A +	5.53	5.70	5.25	5.06
supporting the ERA (D ₂)	A +	5.40	5.76	5.59	5.37

The posttest model included two variables not used in the pretest model. The first variable, dishonest, increased in desirability for candidate A's voters and decreased in desirability for candidate P's

voters. The other new variable, support for the ERA, had increased agreement for candidate A's voters and decreased in the level of agreement for candidate P's voters. The other two variables held in their relationship, with voters who selected the candidate having the trait apparently seeing the variable as more positive than the other group. It was interesting to note that although these variables were important to the discrimination on the pretest, the distance between the groups' means increased on the posttest.

Table 10 - Classifications from the Discriminant Analysis Pretest and Posttest

Two Positive Candidates (candidate K vs. candidate V)

	Number of Variables	Classification Correct	Classification Incorrect
Pretest	3	42	20
Posttest	3	46	16

Table 11 - Important Variables from the Pretest Discriminant Analysis And Means for Candidate Voter Groups

Variable	Candidate and Valence	Mean K	Mean V
follower (D ₂)	K +	4.85	5.22
adventurous (D ₁)	V +	4.11	4.54
reinstatement of price controls (D ₁)	V +	4.07	4.85

Table 12 - Important Variables from the Posttest Discriminant Analysis And Pretest and Posttest Means for Candidate Voter Groups

Variable	Candidate and Valence	Pretest Mean K	Posttest Mean K	Pretest Mean V	Posttest Mean V
good natured (D ₁)	K +	4.81	4.96	4.88	4.34
aggressive (D ₂)	V +	5.22	5.44	5.68	5.88
impeachment (D ₂)	K +	6.07	6.25	5.48	5.74

None of the three variables used in the posttest discrimination were important in the pretest discrimination. The first variable, good natured, increased in desirability for candidate K's voters and decreased in desirability for candidate V's voters, thus increasing the distance between them. It was interesting to note that on the pretest, the trait apparently was seen as more desirable by candidate V's voters than by candidate K's voters.

The other two variables, aggressive and impeachment, were more important for voters who selected the candidate having the trait or advocating the issue. Although the distance between the means on aggressive did not increase, and the means for impeachment increased only slightly, these two variables became important to the discrimination on the posttest. The reason for this occurrence was that the within group variance of both groups decreased, thus forming distinguishable clusters for the discrimination. The important implication from this occurrence in relation to social judgment theory will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Table 13 - Within Group Variance for Aggressive and Impeachment: Pretest and Posttest Comparison

Variable	Pretest Variance K	Posttest Variance K	Pretest Variance V	Posttest Variance V
aggressive	1.25	.94	1.14	.56
impeachment	1.26	.66	1.87	1.12

Table 14 - Classification from the Discriminant Analysis Pretest and Posttest

Two Negative Candidates (candidate T vs. candidate R)

	Number of Variables	Classification Correct	Classification Incorrect
Pretest	5	50	12
Posttest	5	44	18

Table 15 - Important Variables from Pretest Discriminant Analysis And Means for Candidate Voter Groups

Variable	Candidate and Valence	Mean T	Mean R
unaggressive (D ₁)	R -	2.51	3.05
talker (D ₁)	T -	3.48	4.17
no arms to Israel (D ₁)	T -	4.55	3.60
reinstatement of price controls (D ₁)	R -	5.22	5.74
reinstatement of price controls (D ₂)	R -	4.96	4.17

Table 16 - Important Variables from the Posttest Discriminant Analysis And Pretest And Posttest Means for Candidate Voter Groups

Variable	Candidate and Valence	Pretest Mean T	Posttest Mean T	Pretest Mean R	Posttest Mean R
inconsistent (D ₂)	R -	5.92	5.77	5.91	5.52
talker (D ₂)	T -	4.70	4.77	5.31	5.28
no arms to Israel (D ₁)	T -	4.55	4.59	3.60	3.65
reinstatement of price controls (D ₂)	R -	4.96	5.03	4.17	4.34
\$750 tax deduction (D ₂)	R -	5.18	5.51	5.40	5.28

For the variables inconsistent, talker, and the \$750 tax deduction, the importance of these negative variables lessened for the groups which selected the candidate and increased for the group which rejected the candidate. The other two variables of no arms to Israel and price

controls changed only slightly in the distance which was previously significant for pretest discrimination. On both issues, voters who selected the candidate taking this position apparently saw the stand as less negative than voters who rejected the candidate.

Control Group

There were no significant changes on any variable in the control group condition (Table 17).

Table 17 - Control Group t's for Issue and Personality Trait Variables

<u>Variable</u>	
<u>Issue</u>	<u>t</u>
1. Presidential Impeachment (D ₁)	1.65
2. Presidential Impeachment (D ₂)	0.79
3. The U.S. should not sell arms to Israel (D ₁)	0.74
4. The U.S. should not sell arms to Israel (D ₂)	0.89
5. The oil companies are trying to stop ecology (D ₁)	0.13
6. The oil companies are trying to stop ecology (D ₂)	1.77
7. Presidents should be limited to one term (D ₁)	0.17
8. Presidents should be limited to one term (D ₂)	0.64
9. Price controls should be reinstated (D ₁)	0.05
10. Price controls should be reinstated (D ₂)	0.27
11. The ERA should be supported (D ₁)	0.01
12. The ERA should be supported (D ₂)	1.79
13. The \$750 per child income tax deduction should be eliminated (D ₁)	0.79
14. The \$750 per child income tax deduction should be eliminated (D ₂)	0.32
15. Presidential and Congressional elections should be publicly financed (D ₁)	0.51
16. Presidential and Congressional elections should be publicly financed (D ₂)	0.64

Table 17 - (continued)

<u>Personality</u>	<u>t</u>
1. inconsistent (D_1)	1.06
2. inconsistent (D_2)	0.59
3. unaggressive (D_1)	0.05
4. unaggressive (D_2)	1.13
5. follower (D_1)	0.21
6. follower (D_2)	1.19
7. progressive (D_1)	1.09
8. progressive (D_2)	1.47
9. talker (D_1)	0.33
10. talker (D_2)	0.80
11. dishonest (D_1)	1.14
12. dishonest (D_2)	0.03
13. closeminded (D_1)	0.95
14. closeminded (D_2)	0.03
15. good natured (D_1)	0.31
16. good natured (D_2)	0.03
17. aggressive (D_1)	1.41
18. aggressive (D_2)	1.10
19. adventurous (D_1)	0.54
20. adventurous (D_2)	0.80
21. energetic (D_1)	1.18
22. energetic (D_2)	0.22

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, there are five sections. First, the results of the testing of the hypotheses were reviewed. Next, there was an evaluation of the use of simulation. There were three pieces of evidence which were discussed that indicate that the use of simulation for the study of political communication is a reasonable methodology. Also, implications from the use of simulation about the nature of political campaigns were examined.

Third, there was an examination of issues and personality traits as variables influencing voting behavior. The indications that the variables may function differently in ambivalent, positive, and negative choice situations was discussed. Also, a possible problem in the structuring of the ambivalent candidates was discussed and implications about the use of issues and personality traits were drawn.

Fourth, support for the social judgment theory in terms of attitude change was explored. The fact that every variable followed one of the predictions of social judgment theory and that there was no evidence of counter-attitudinal behavior were examined in terms of the connection between political attitudes and voting behavior.

Finally, implications for future research were discussed for three possible new directions. First, the indications for future theory building and model building were examined. Secondly, the need for an examination of the communication process was discussed. Finally,

implications for field research were examined.

Conclusions

Hypothesis 1, which predicted that there would be no significant difference between the predicted proportion of votes and the actual proportion of votes for the hypothetical Congressional candidates, was not rejected for the ambivalent election, but was rejected for the positive and negative elections. The accuracy in the ambivalent case, however, was found to be a function of a number of misclassifications for each group cancelling each others' effect.

Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 predicted that the important variables for discrimination of the offset voting data would be the same variables important for the discrimination of the posttest data of the simulation group. For the positive and negative cases, hypotheses 2 and 3, respectively, the hypotheses were rejected. In the ambivalent case, the hypothesis was not rejected, therefore indicating an association between the two rankings.

Hypotheses 5 and 6, which predicted that models using both issues and personality traits could discriminate between voter groups better than models using only one of the variables for the positive and negative cases, were not rejected. Hypothesis 7, however, which made the same prediction for the ambivalent case, was rejected since an analysis using only personality traits had equal ability to discriminate between groups of voters as a model using a combination of issues and personality traits.

Hypothesis 8, which predicted that there would be no difference in the degrees of attitudes before and after the campaign process, was

rejected because in every condition when means for each voter group on the variables important in the posttest discriminant analysis were examined, it was found that the variables changed as predicted by the social judgment theory. The nature and implications of these changes will be discussed later in the chapter.

Discussion

The Simulation and Its Effects

The results from this study suggested that although the predictions of voting behavior were inaccurate, the experimental treatment seemingly had an effect on the subjects. There were several indications which warrant this conclusion.

First, although the predicted percentages for the ambivalent case were exact, when the number of misclassifications resulting from the use of the predictor model were computed, it was seen that the accuracy of the model was partially the result of the fact that two misclassifications cancelled each other in the computation of percentages. In the positive case and negative case, the predicted winners for the election were correct. However, the landslide margin that was predicted was not near the actual percentage of votes received. The fact that the subjects' initial attitudes were poor predictors of the subjects' responses to the set of those attitudes (the candidates') after the simulation apparently indicates that the process altered the initial responses.

Another indication that the experimental campaign had an effect upon the subjects was the difference of ranking of the variables between the offset group and the experimental posttest. Although there

was a significant correlation between the overall ranking of variables in the ambivalent case, there was no significant correlation in the positive or negative cases.

One possible explanation for these results would be the nature of the decision-making situation. In the positive or negative cases, the voter would have to engage in more cognitive reorganization to rationalize the choice as opposed to the ambivalent case where the voter could find both positive and negative elements in the situation. This explanation is parallel to explanations of dissonance relief in decision-making contexts. As Kiesler, Collins and Miller explain: "The less attractive the chosen alternative, the greater the dissonance. The more attractive the unchosen alternative, the greater the dissonance."¹ The ambivalent candidates would be between these alternatives, and therefore, create less dissonance.

The final piece of evidence which indicated that the experimental communication treatment affected the subjects was the comparison of variables in the discriminant analyses of the pretest and posttest in the experimental condition. In every case, some new variables which were not important for the discrimination using the pretest data became important to the discrimination when using the posttest data. This fact indicated that during the campaign process, a reordering of variables took place. If this reordering was due to the events outside the experiment, changes should have been observed in the control group. Since these changes were not seen in the control group, the reordering was apparently the result of the subjects' experiencing the simulated campaign process and decision-making task.

The indications that the simulated campaign process affected the

subjects has several important implications for studies of political communication in a field setting. First, since the campaign process may cause a restructuring of variables involved in the voters' decision, basing the structure of the campaign communication on research gathered well in advance of a campaign may not be the best strategy. Secondly, it would be important in a field setting to understand the voters' view of the type of choice they have. That is, if the voters see the candidates as ambivalent, then it may be easier to locate important variables than if all the candidates are seen as positive or negative.

Finally, when attempting to understand the development of voters' decisions in a field setting, it would be important to measure voters' attitudes a number of times during the communication process. If the communication strategy is to be evaluated and adjusted during a campaign, then it would be imperative to locate new, important variables as they occur. In the practical sense of politics, understanding the changes resulting from the communication process after the election has limited applicability. In terms of research of political communication, such intervening measures, both in field settings and controlled simulations, may clarify the development of the decision-making process.

Issues and Personality Traits As Variables

In the examination of issues and personality traits, the results from the positive and negative cases were similar, but these situations were different from the ambivalent case. In discriminating between voters in the choice between two positive candidates and between voters in the choice between two negative candidates, using a combination of the issues and personality variables produced a better model than using

only one of the variables.

The fact that neither variable alone could discriminate between voters better than a combination of the variables seems to indicate that these variables operate situationally. That is, at least in the choice between two positive candidates and the choice between two negative candidates, any variable cannot be assumed to be more important than another variable because it is an issue or personality trait. There was apparently another factor, such as ego-involvement which determines the influence of a variable in a voter's decision.

In the ambivalent choice situation, using issues alone was just as accurate as using a combination of issues and personality traits, but issues alone was not as good as a combination model. This result may have been due to the structuring of the candidates for the simulation and the attempts to reinforce the attitudes with communication. The two candidates were structured with one candidate being positive on issues and negative on personality traits, and the other candidate being constructed oppositely. If the reinforcement caused attitudinal change in the predicted direction, then the voters who selected the candidate with positive issues should show more extreme attitude positions about the issues. The same should hold true for attitudes about personality traits for the voters who selected the candidate with positive personality traits.

Table 18 - Means for Agreement and Desirability Dimensions for the Issue-Only Model and Personality Traits-Only Model in the Ambivalent Case with Candidate A Being Positive on Issues and Candidate P Being Positive on Personality Traits

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Mean A</u>	<u>Mean P</u>
oil companies and ecology	5.70	5.06
limitation of President to one term	3.13	3.46
support for the ERA	5.76	5.37
\$750 per child tax deduction	3.23	3.71
<u>Personality Traits</u>		
progressive	5.73	5.90
dishonest	2.06	1.34
closeminded	2.63	2.00
energetic	5.60	5.96

From an examination of the posttest means of the "agreement" and "desirability" dimensions, it seems that the explanation is valid. The group who voted for Candidate A, who was positive on issues, showed more extreme positions in their opinions about issues. The group who voted for Candidate P, who was positive on personality traits, showed more extreme positions in their opinions about personality traits.

It was interesting, however, that the personality traits became distinct enough to discriminate equally as well as using a combination of the two variables. This finding may indicate a difference in the level of reinforcement through communication which can be achieved for these two variables. For example, it may be easier to reinforce attitudes about personality traits since the judgments would not be influenced by the level of information about current events, but would be dependent upon a belief structure which has been formed through socialization.

Support for the Social Judgment Theory

The concept that responses to variables could be predicted in terms of social judgment theory was substantiated in three ways. First, the means for the variables which were important for pretest discrimination

and held in this importance for the posttest discrimination indicated that the group who selected a candidate having a certain trait or position saw the trait as more positive, or at least less negative, than the group who rejected the candidate.

This fact, when interpreted in terms of latitudes of acceptance and rejection, suggested that the traits of the selected candidate were closer to the "most acceptable" position, and the traits of the rejected candidate were closer to the "most unacceptable" position. An example of this type of occurrence was the variable of sale of arms to Israel in the negative case (Tables 15 and 16). Although claiming that no change in the relationship was significant seems contradictory, this concept is important when the fact that many other variables within the multivariate situation were changing, yet this important relationship was stable.

The second type of variable functioning which supported interpretation by social judgment theory was the direction of changes in mean scores of variables which were not important in the pretest discrimination, but became important to the posttest discrimination. The changes in these mean scores indicated attitudinal change was in the direction that would be predicted by assimilation-contrast.

In all three choice situations, the new variables' means for the group who selected the candidate associated with the variable increased in a positive direction. Also, the new variables' means associated with the rejected candidates decreased in a negative direction. In all groups, there was no evidence of counter-attitudinal behavior, i.e., for every group, the variables associated with the selected candidate were apparently seen as more acceptable (or less objectionable) than

the variables associated with the rejected candidate. Examples of this concept are support for the ERA (Table 9), in the ambivalent case, good natured (Table 12) in the positive case, and inconsistent (Table 16) in the negative case.

The finding of consistent behavior and attitude responses is particularly important in the light of previous research attempting to relate attitudes and behavior. In many previous field studies, discrepancy was found between reported attitudes and behavior.² The fact that the two were consistent tends to support the previous premise that voting behavior may be distinct from other types of behavior in the sense that someone else is selected to carry out the actual action described by the attitude.

Finally, social judgment theory predicts that the reinforcement of an attitude in the latitude of acceptance can make the position "most acceptable." The concept was apparent when variables were not important in the pretest but became important in the posttest, although the distance between means remained relatively stable. The variables became important because within-group variances became smaller. Since the mean increased and the variance became smaller, it seemed that the group's view of the variable clustered at a point near the extreme or "most acceptable" position. Examples of the occurrence were seen in the positive case on the variables of aggressive and impeachment (Table 12).

Since every important variable followed one of the predictions of social judgment theory, it seems that this theory offers a sound interpretation of voting behavior based on these two variables. There is one other piece of evidence which must be examined, however, before

accepting this generalization. If the variables, through stabilization in latitudes of acceptance and rejection, assimilation-contrast, and clustering toward the "most acceptable" point, were consistent, then the groups who chose each candidate should become more distinctive for the discriminant analysis.

This concept can be seen through a comparison of the number of misclassifications of the pretest data and the posttest data. In the ambivalent case and the positive case, the posttest data were superior for discrimination when compared to the pretest data.

In the negative case, the posttest discrimination was not as good as the pretest discrimination. Although the mean scores functioned in the predicted manner, the poorer discrimination indicated a wider variance in scores which clouded the discrimination. This fact indicated that attempting to reinforce negative attitudes in an attack manner with no supportative reinforcement of positive attitudes may cause a shift toward a non-committal position in some cases. Such an implication would have significant meaning in terms of political communication strategy. It may not be as effective to use only attacks upon an opponent as it would be to use only supportative, or supportative and attacks during a campaign.

Despite this one question raised in the negative condition, the examination of political communication variables with the predictions of social judgment theory appears to be a reasonable approach considering the functioning of the variables in this study. It should also be noted that there was support for the view that political attitudes are multi-dimensional since the changes seemed to occur on both the "agreement" or "desirable" dimensions and the "importance" dimension with approxi-

mately equal frequency.

If a social judgment theory approach to political communication is relevant, it explains why field studies have located different variables as significant in different elections. Attempts to debate the relative influence of issues or images may be a meaningless discussion since the functioning of variables in these categories may be dependent upon the voters' preconceived acceptance or rejection of items regardless of the category.

Implications for Future Research

This study indicated that it is both feasible and possible to use simulation as a methodology for the study of political communication. Through the use of this somewhat ignored methodology, future research can make two important contributions to the study of political communication. First, through continued use, refinements of methods can be gained and problems overcome. For example, in this study, the structure of the ambivalent candidates may have produced results which were easily misinterpretable when comparing an issue model, a personality model, and a model using a combination of these variables. As these problems are discovered, necessary adjustments can be made.

Secondly, the use of voter simulation gives a way for findings to be confirmed through repetition and allows for any number of variables to be studied. If methodological mistakes are discovered, then the use of simulation allows for correction of the mistakes and the repetition of the study. In a field setting during an actual election, this luxury does not exist. If mistakes are made the data are lost.

The simulation also allows future studies of political communication

to add or subtract any number or type of variables. Through the systematic controlling of the variables within the model, the validity of using social judgment theory interpretations can be tested. From the results of this study, for example, the next logical extension should be the adding of a new communication variable to determine if the functioning of issues, personality traits, and the new variable add support to the social judgment theory interpretation, or support another alternative. Possible new variables which could be used to expand the model would be sex of the candidate, endorsement by others who have high or low credibility with the electorate, peer agreement, party affiliation, or contact with the candidate.

Another direction that future research should take is the dissecting of the political communication process which was used in the study. Although the social judgment interpretation appears reasonable for interpretation of voting behavior, to gain in-depth understanding of the communication process, isolated examination of parts of the communication process needs to be explored. This study strongly suggested, for example, that an attack structured message may function differently than a supportive message. Likewise, the relative strengths and weaknesses of different channels' contributions to the reinforcement of attitudes needs to be explored.

The attitude responses to reinforcement also suggest a new direction for communication study. With the amount of change which was exhibited in all three situations, the power of persuasion through the reinforcement of attitudes seems to warrant further investigation. The concept of reinforcement of attitudes to produce change may have significant meaning in context other than political communication. The

changes produced in the study also support the basic contention of Swanson that dealing in acceptable limits does not mean stagnation, but merely sets parameters in which the communicator must work.³

Finally, future research must take the major concept in this study, the voting response to a campaign is a function of social judgment and ego involvement, and test its validity in a field setting. One important investigation, for example, would be to test the validity of the interpretation for campaigns designed for different public offices than Congressional. The confirmation or rejection of the theory with any new implications can then be returned to the controlled situation for further examination. If this circular type research procedure can be accomplished, the constructive theory building in political communication will be sound and meaningful, and the probability for understanding increased instead of confused.

Notes

1. Kiesler, Collins and Miller, p. 201
2. For example, see R.D. Minard, "Race Relationships in the Pocahontas Coal Field, Journal of Social Issues, (1952), p. 29-44, and R.T. LaPiere, "Attitudes vs. Action," Social Forces, (1934), p. 230-237.
3. Swanson, p. 133.

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF THE CANDIDATES

Race 1 Candidate A vs. Candidate P

Candidate A has been a strong supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment because he feels that there has been sex discrimination in many job fields. He has also attacked the big oil companies for taking advantage of the energy crisis to reverse policies proposed by ecology groups. He has been opposed to limiting any President to one term in office.

While serving in office, he has refused to support any legislation which was not introduced by a member of his political party. Recently, a citizens group investigating a number of candidates found evidence that some of his campaign funds were coming from organized crime.

Candidate P favors the limitation of the President to one term because he feels that this action will help end the use of government employees to run political campaigns. He is also in favor of a bill which would take away the \$750 per child deduction from Federal income tax. Candidate P has opposed the Equal Rights Amendment because he feels that it is unnecessary.

While in business, Candidate P managed three companies at one time. He also found time to work as a "big brother" to underprivileged children and head the United Way fund raising campaign. He also helped raise funds to start an experimental school that would use new techniques for the teaching of the mentally retarded.

Race 2 Candidate K vs. Candidate V

Candidate K believes that the President should be impeached because he has lost credibility with the American people. He also proposes election reforms by the public financing of the Presidential and Congressional campaigns. He takes a lot of kidding about being bald, but he just smiles and says "I'm not bald, other men are just too hairy." He has never introduced new legislation, but he has actively supported many bills proposed by other congressmen.

Candidate V wants to return price controls to food in order to slow down inflation. He opposes the limitation of the President to one term. Candidate V started his own business and made it into one of the largest companies in the state. He has never proposed a bill in the legislature that has been defeated, although some of them were quite controversial. Candidate V spends his free time camping and traveling by canoe down rivers all over the U.S.

Race 3 Candidate T vs. Candidate R

Candidate T is opposed to the U.S. selling arms to Israel as he feels this constitutes an unnecessary military involvement in the area. He has supported the big oil companies because he feels much of the ecology considerations which they are forced to have are really unnecessary and hurt the economy. Candidate T feels that thus far no evidence has been presented which would warrant the impeachment of the President.

In his own community, Candidate T has proposed many citizen committees to solve local problems. However, he has never actively participated in the organization of these groups.

While serving as a state legislator, Candidate R proposed much legislation. When they met with opposition, however, he did not push for their passage. Because he feels that overpopulation is the real cause of the energy crisis, he favors a proposal that the \$750 per child Federal income tax deduction be ended. He also opposes price controls on foods as he sees this action as government interference with free enterprise. Candidate R changes his mind often, however. Sometimes on an issue stand he has previously taken.

APPENDIX B

TV ADS

I. Picture- little boy and little girl

Voice: Do either of these children look handicapped? One of them is. Look close. The child on the left has a handicap from birth because this child is female. Unless something changes, she will be offered fewer job opportunities, less money, and fewer promotions. Candidate A wants to do something about it. He supports the Equal Rights Amendment. Vote Candidate A for Congressional seat 1. Let's not handicap our nation.

II. Picture- Man asleep

Voice: Some people would rather sit and let the world pass them by. Candidate P, however, wants to make this land a better place. Although managing three companies, he still found time to be a "big brother" to underprivileged children. He also headed the United Way drive in his community. Vote Candidate P for Congressional seat 1 and get a man who cares.

III. Picture- White House five

Voice: Mitchell, Dean, Hunt, Erlichman, Halderman; Five reasons why the President has lost credibility. A national disgrace has been the main contribution of this administration. With the top five presidential aides in jail, no wonder the American people have had enough of this administration. Candidate K favors the impeachment of the President. We need to restore our house to order. Vote Candidate K for Congressional seat 2.

IV. Picture- River

Voice: To take care of nature, you have to understand it. Candidate V spends his free time camping and traveling by canoe down rivers all over the United States. He understands nature. Vote for Candidate V for Congressional seat 2 and help preserve what we have left.

V. Picture- smile-frown face

Voice: How does this guy feel? Hard to tell, isn't it. Candidate R is much like this. He often changes his mind about issue stands he has previously made. It's hard to tell how he feels on any issue. Do we need our leaders to be indecisive? Get real leadership, vote Candidate T for Congressional seat 3.

VI. Picture- plaque of soldiers

Voice: Many men have died to protect their freedom. In Israel, the constant threat of war is a reality. The Russians are giving arms to the Arabs. Israel wants to buy arms from us. Should we deny these people the right to protect themselves? Candidate T thinks so. He wants to forbid the sale of arms to Israel. Don't let this country turn its back on one of the few democracies left. Vote Candidate R for Congressional seat 3.

APPENDIX C

RADIO ADS

I. Can you imagine a world without fish, beaches, or birds? Luckily, some people foresaw our plight and started working to preserve our environment. But the tide is changing because the oil companies have convinced the government that immediate needs are more important than future generations. Candidate A wants to make sure that those who come after us will have something to inherit. He has pledged to fight for the preservation of ecological programs despite the wishes of big oil companies. Help keep our earth alive. Vote Candidate A for Congressional seat 1.

II. If America is to be strong in the future, education will play a vital role. Not just the education of a few, but the education of all people. Candidate P helped raise funds to start an experimental school for the teaching of the mentally retarded. Get progressive action. Vote for Candidate P for Congressional seat 1.

III. You've heard that money can buy anything. Recently, that sure has seemed true in national politics. To keep a small group of people from influencing elections, Candidate K believes that all Presidential and Congressional elections should be publicly financed. Give the power back to the people. Vote for Candidate K for Congressional seat 2.

IV. Candidate V started his own business and made it into one of the largest companies in the state. He has been elected to the state legislature four times previously. He has never proposed a bill in the legislature that has been defeated, although some of them were quite controversial. Get a man of action. Vote for Candidate V for Congressional seat 2.

V. Talk is cheap. Candidate T did a lot of talking. He proposed many citizen committees to solve local problems. However, he never actively participated in the organization of these groups. Don't we have enough talkers in Congress? Vote for Candidate R for Congressional seat 3. Get action, not words.

VI. Should the government try to control your family's lives? Candidate R seems to think so. He favors the repeal of the \$750 per child income tax deduction. Government should not control people, people should control government. Keep your voice heard. Vote for Candidate T for Congressional seat 3.

APPENDIX D

THE CITIZENS' BUREAU REPORT ON THREE CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS

(Compiled by the examination of campaign literature, independent observation, and analysis of previous records.)

Congressional seat 1 Candidate A vs. Candidate P

Candidate A has opposed the limitation of the President to one term in office. He feels if a person does a good job for four years, the people have the right to give him another four years in office. Candidate A has been criticized by both the press and his opponents because he has refused to support any legislation which was not proposed by a member of the same political party that he belongs to. Recently, a citizens group investigating political candidates claimed that they found evidence of campaign funds coming from organized crime.

Candidate P disagrees with Candidate A's stand on the limitation of the President to one term. He feels that a one term limitation would help stop the use of government employees, paid by the taxpayer, in running political campaigns. In his home state, Candidate P has been a strong opponent of the Equal Rights Amendment. He stated that there are too many flaws in the ERA, and it is really not needed. Candidate P also claimed that the major cause of the energy crisis has been overpopulation. As an incentive for population control, he favors the elimination of the \$750 per child deduction on Federal income tax.

Congressional seat 2 Candidate K vs. Candidate V

Candidate K has enjoyed good rapport with his fellow congressmen and the press. Although he is often kidded about being bald, he usually smiles and replies; "I'm not bald, other men are just too hairy." While in Congress, Candidate K never proposed any original legislation, but he did support many bills proposed by other congressmen.

Candidate V feels the major problem facing this country is inflation. To help stop inflation, he believes that the government should continue to control food prices. Candidate V thinks that the proposed limitation of the President to one term is an over reaction to the present situation, and therefore, he is opposed to the action.

Congressional seat 3 Candidate T vs. Candidate R

Candidate T has spoken out against the impeachment of the President. He feels that so far, there has been no evidence of activities which warrant such action. He also feels the relaxation of pollution laws is necessary in order for the big oil companies to find new sources of needed energy.

While serving as a state legislator, Candidate R proposed much legislation. He did not push for their passage, however, when they met with opposition. Candidate R is against food price controls. He claims that such action is an attack on the free enterprise system.

APPENDIX E

THE CONGRESSIONAL PREVIEW


(A Report Compiled by UPI
Political Correspondents)

NOTE: The description in this message included all the variables and is a duplication of Appendix A.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH


James Travis Kitchens was born May 8, 1949, in Atlanta, Georgia. He received his early education in Atlanta and in 1967 graduated from Southwest High School. In 1971, he received his B.S. degree in Speech Education from the University of Georgia. His M.A. degree was earned in 1972 at the University of Georgia. In 1972, Mr. Kitchens entered the University of Florida, and his Ph. D. was conferred in 1974.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.




Douglas G. Bock, Chairman
Associate Professor of Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



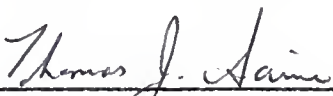
Donald E. Williams
Professor of Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Anthony J. Clark
Associate Professor of Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Thomas J. Saine
Assistant Professor of Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



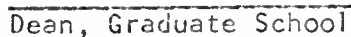
J. Michael Cornett
Assistant Professor of Speech

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Alan Agresti
Assistant Professor of Statistics

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Speech in the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Dean, Graduate School

December, 1974



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